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REVIEWS AND NOTES.

TWO LETTERS FROM G. H. KNIBBS, C.M.G., F.S.S., THE
COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN OF AUSTRALIA.

(The following letters, which the Editor ventures to publish without having sought Mr. Knibbs' permission, are printed not so much for his complimentary remarks about the Memorial Volume but for his views on statistics, national as well as international. They are dated Melbourne, the 28th of June and the 23rd of July, 1918.)

"Your kind letter of 13th May has been in my hands for a little while, and today brought the History of Statistics, the memorial volume to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the American Statistical Association. It is a magnificent and very valuable volume and I am indeed glad to have a copy. I congratulate you most heartily upon its compilation and in view of the world's future it is obvious that a work of this kind was needed, and further, that the statistician will have to be the guide of governments as he was in the Statistisches Reichsamt in Berlin. I hope that legislating in the dark will be soon a thing of the past and that all nations worthy of the name will watch the trend of affairs in the light of the facts which a proper scheme of statistics would systematically record. . . .

"Facts brought to light during this great war have revealed the necessity of watching the food supply and the rate at which our industrial raw material is being exploited. I hope to lay the foundations of good practical systems of statistical methodology before I finish my statistical career, as I feel sure that the world will not be able to live in the future in the haphazard way it has in the past. Mankind is moving towards some great cataclysm or towards a higher evolution—one does not know which—but the devilry of this war has shown that the human race must either recognize its solidarity or be prepared for conflicts compared with which the present war will be a mere circumstance."

"Since writing you on the 28th June I have had a little time to look into the very fine collection of papers preceded by your Presidential address of 13th February, 1914, on the History of the American Statistical Association. The whole idea is very happily conceived and it is interesting to notice that the Association has passed through its period of difficulty and has come out satisfactorily. There are some remarks in S. N. D. North's paper that are very much to the point. For example:—"The days of the laissez faire have gone forever. There is no longer any field of human activity into which it is not now accepted as both the right and the duty of the state to intervene, by investigation and remedial action."

"I am satisfied that every country which intends to be in the first rank of nations will have to make a thorough study of its affairs and guide the

development of its people both eugenically and economically. The old "go-as-you-please" system *must* disappear. Statistics used for the benefit of the people will replace the old use by monarchs of the Frederick the Great type. Really international statistics will, moreover, bring into relief the real questions for international settlement, viz., questions touching the standard of living, the rate of procreation, cosmopolitical economy, and all matters affecting the solidarity of the human race; for example, international services, the trade arrangements between nations, the regulations of productivity, the desirability or otherwise of the anonymity of capital.

"The thinkers of the world have not as yet resolutely faced these questions, nor have they faced the question whether we are to be under the guidance of the superior type of demagogue or under the guidance of the most capable and strenuous men of our day and generation, *i. e.*, under the guidance of the real aristocrats. You remember Carlyle's estimate of the mass of people. The political arena shews that appeals to passion and prejudice are more effectual than appeals to the higher elements of our being. Internationally, we appear still to be as dangerous as the shark tribes are to one another. The idea of international solidarity has been born but its light is very feeble. One can hardly say it is yet incarnate, but if we are to end the war we have a long way to go in the direction of the recognition of mutual rights. Fierce and ruthless struggle would mean a very bad time for the world for the instruments of destruction have become very terrible and must soon become still more so.

"Your idea was a very happy one and the matter in this commemorative volume will do much to bring about a popular realisation of the fact that the statistician and statistical method must be used not less in national affairs than it is in private business. The guidance of national development is of incalculable importance, and the present abominable war has shewn that we are not entitled to let matters drift. There is an immense field to be covered but there will be no difficulty in dealing with it if we endeavor to handle the whole problem systematically.

"Again warmly congratulating you,

"Believe me,

"Yours very sincerely,

"G. H. KNIBBS."

Census of Prairie Provinces, Population and Agriculture, 1916, Census and Statistics Office, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, J. de Labroquerie Taché, 1918.

An important contribution to American census material comes to hand in the complete edition of the 1916 population and agricultural census of the Canadian "Prairie Provinces," Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. This census is one of a series of decennial censuses, 1906, 1916, etc. The information was apparently tabulated with most commendable promptness, since it was published early in 1917 in the form of three separate reports,